

In my previous post I blasted from the past about my translation of the Apostolic Fathers for the Loeb Classical Library. That was actually the first of a few posts on the topic, and since I referred to the next ones, I thought I should give them — at least the one that followed. Here it is. As I point out, in a way it's about how, in a concrete way, life is a series of chances.....

It seems that much that has happened in my professional life has been because of serendipity. Back when I was a believer, we called it Providence. (!) It's how I got my first job at Rutgers in 1984; how I got my current position at UNC in 1988; how I got asked to write something other than a technical study involving the Greek manuscript tradition of the New Testament - a textbook for undergraduates (in the early 1990s), and thus, in a sense, started my publishing career; how I had my first bestselling book ([Misquoting Jesus](#)) become a NY Times bestseller in 2005; and, as it turns out, how I came to undertake my first major translation project, a new edition of the Apostolic Fathers for the Loeb Classical Library (starting in 1999; published in 2003).

I may tell the other stories at some point (I think I've told the first one already on the blog; I'll have to look to see). For now, the Loeb.

So in 1999 (I **think** that was the year - it may have been a year before or after) I was teaching my PhD seminar on the Apostolic Fathers. First, a bit of background. Since UNC is a major research university, the faculty here have a relatively (OK, very) light teaching load: just two courses each semester. And since our department has a strong and thriving PhD program, in which NT/Early Christianity plays a vital role, I teach just one undergraduate course and one PhD seminar each semester. Our PhD students take seminars for 2-3 years, and so I have five or six seminars that I offer in rotation over a three-year period. These include a graduate-level introduction to the major critical issues in the study of the New Testament (including the history of the discipline); a seminar on New Testament textual criticism (reconstructing the earliest form of the text from the surviving manuscripts and writing the history of its transmission); early Christian apocrypha (the Gospels, epistles, Acts, and apocalypses that did not make it into the New Testament); literary forgery in the early Christian tradition; and - well, other things over the years (including readings in the Greco-Roman religions; the rise of early Christian anti-Judaism; early Christian heresy and orthodoxy; Christianizing the Roman empire; and, well, other things). And the Apostolic Fathers.

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